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(54) **Creamy substance dispenser**

(57) A cream dispenser comprising two chambers (2, 6) separated by a wall (4) provided with an aperture (5) in correspondence with which there is provided a non-return valve (11), one (6) of the two chambers (2, 6) being partly bounded by an elastically deformable cap (7) having a discharge hole (8) provided at the centre of an annular rib (9) retained by appendices (10) projecting about said aperture (5) from said wall (4), the non-return valve consisting of a discoidal member (11) with an appendix (12) which extends towards said hole (8) to seal it under the action of elastically deformable elements (14) acting between the member (11) and said wall (4).

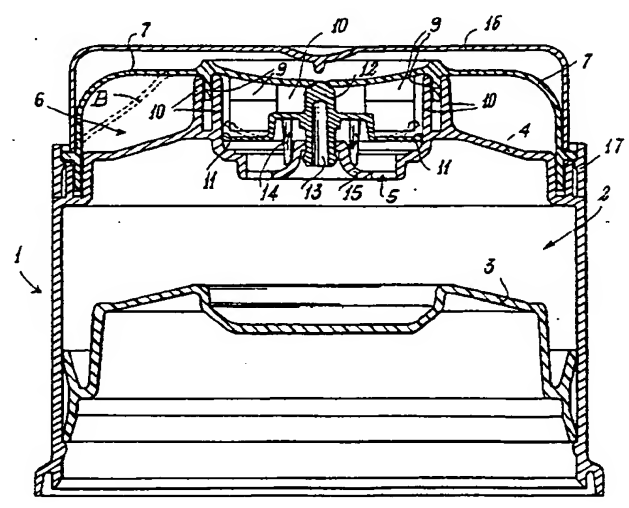


Fig. 1

EP 0 810 160 A2

Description

This invention relates to a dispenser for creamy substances, such as creams for cosmetic use, of the type comprising a container bounding a cylindrical chamber containing the creamy substance and closed at one end by a piston movable in a sealed manner along said chamber.

Many types of dispensers are known provided with mechanical devices for moving the piston only in that direction which reduces the volume of the chamber containing the creamy substance. Reference can be made for example to US-A-421255, EP-A-0051790, EP-A-0084638, US-A-3088636 and US-A-3768705. These dispensers have a relatively complex structure, are costly and their operation is often difficult and unsatisfactory.

Dispensers are also known having two separate chambers mutually communicating via a non-return valve. Of the two chambers one is cylindrical and is intended only to act as a container for the creamy substance, it being closed at one end by a sealed piston freely slidable within the chamber. The other chamber is the dispensing chamber and is at least partially deformable (to allow compression of that part of the substance contained in it and drawn by suction from the cylindrical chamber via a non-return valve), it comprising a dispensing nozzle provided with a closure element to allow the substance to pass only to the outside.

When dispensing ceases, the deformable part of the dispensing chamber returns to its rest position to close the nozzle and generate a vacuum which draws the substance from the cylindrical chamber to the dispensing chamber via the non-return valve.

These types of dispensers (described for example in US-A-4,821,926, US-A-4,890,773, US-A-4,913,322, US-A-4,946,076, US-A-5,176,291 and EP-A-0 686 431) have a rather complex mechanical structure, with rigid component parts slidable one on another, causing considerable operating problems as a result of the possible hardening of the creamy substances within the respective dispensing chambers, difficult assembly and consequent relatively high cost.

To overcome the aforementioned problems, improvements have been proposed to the dispensers of the latter type, by forming with elastically deformable material an entire wall bounding the dispensing chamber. By squeezing and deforming this wall, the cream contained in this chamber is directly compressed, so that it emerges through the discharge nozzle.

A series of dispensers of this type are illustrated in EP-A-0376097, but these dispensers have a very complex structure, requiring inter alia the presence and operation of levers for squeezing the deformable wall of the dispensing chamber.

A simpler and more economical version of the dispenser having a dispensing chamber bounded by an elastically deformable wall is represented in US-A-5,377,880 (and in the corresponding European patent

EP-A-0600286) in which the dispensing nozzle consists of a hole provided in the deformable wall. This hole is positioned in correspondence with the free end of a rigid peg fixed to project into the dispensing chamber. When in the rest state, the deformable wall is elastically urged towards the peg such that the end of the peg is reliably forced into said hole to seal it. As this sealing depends only on the elastic compression force (which necessarily cannot be high) developed by the elastic wall on the end of the pin, and as the dispensing chamber is filled with creamy substance which tends to urge the elastic wall outwards, it follows that the sealing of the dispensing chamber is very uncertain. Moreover, as the cream is dispensed to the outside only when the orifice defining the discharge hole is deformed elastically such that only a small portion of the surface of this hole is withdrawn from the adjacent surface of the peg, it follows that, to be dispensed to the outside, the cream must pass through a very small aperture (because most of the hole remains obstructed by the end of the pin), and hence dispensing is difficult and very slow.

The main object of the present invention is therefore to provide a creamy substance dispenser, of the type comprising a cylindrical chamber with a movable piston, communicating with a dispensing chamber via at least one aperture closed by a non-return valve and in which the dispensing chamber is partly bounded by an elastically deformable wall, said dispenser being formed from a very small number of components easily assembled together, such that the dispenser is very economical, provides a perfect seal during closure and allows easy dispensing of the creamy substance during the use of the dispenser.

This and further objects are attained by a dispenser comprising a substantially rigid casing bounding a cylindrical chamber fillable with a creamy substance, said chamber being closed at one end by a movable piston freely slidable under sealed conditions along the cylindrical surface of the chamber, which at its other end is bounded by a transverse wall traversed by at least one aperture connecting said cylindrical chamber to a dispensing chamber, the outwardly facing portion of which is defined by a profiled body fixed to said rigid casing and formed of an elastically deformable material in which there is provided at least one delivery hole, in correspondence with said aperture there being provided a non-return valve which enables the creamy substance to pass freely from the cylindrical chamber to the dispensing chamber, characterised in that from said body of elastic material there projects in proximity to said delivery hole at least one rib which securely engages corresponding appendices projecting from the opposing surface of said transverse wall about said aperture in the wall, said non-return valve being housed in said dispensing chamber and being provided with guide members which constrain it to said transverse wall while enabling it to freely move within said chamber between a position in which the valve seals said aperture in said transverse wall and a position in which an appendix pro-

jecting from said valve is superposed on said delivery hole to seal it, elastically yieldable members being provided which react between said valve and said transverse wall to urge said valve appendix towards and against said delivery hole.

Preferably said valve consists of a discoidal member the periphery of which is superposed on said aperture and is elastically deformable within the dispensing chamber, said elastically yieldable members consisting of elastically flexible appendices projecting from said discoidal member and having their free end facing the opposing surface of said transverse wall.

The structure, the operation and the characteristics of the dispenser according to the invention will be more apparent from the description of a preferred embodiment thereof, given hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figures 1 and 3 are a longitudinal section through the dispenser, shown in its closed position and during dispensing respectively;

Figure 2 is a view from below (with respect to Figures 1 and 3) of the non-return valve forming part of the dispenser; and

Figure 4 is a cross-section through the dispenser on the line 4-4 of Figure 3.

The dispenser shown on the drawings comprises a substantially rigid casing 1 (for example of glass or plastic) bounding a cylindrical chamber 2 fillable with a creamy substance, such as a cream for cosmetic use.

The chamber 2 is closed lowerly (with respect to Figures 1 and 3) by a piston 3 sealedly slidable along the cylindrical surface of said chamber, which is closed at its other end by a transverse wall 4 in which there are provided apertures 5 connecting the chamber 2 to a dispensing chamber 6 which is bounded upperly (again with respect to said figures) by a profiled cap 7 formed of elastically deformable material and at the centre of which there is provided a delivery hole 8.

The cap 7 is securely fixed to the casing 1 by the peripheral free edge of the cap being forced into and retained within a corresponding annular groove provided in the outer surface of the casing, as can be easily seen in Figures 1 and 3.

A basic characteristic of the dispenser described herein is that a continuous rib 9 projects from the cap 7 about the entire hole 8 (instead of the continuous rib a plurality of separate appendices could be provided) and is inserted and retained between corresponding pairs of appendices 10 (four separate pairs of appendices 10 are shown on the drawings) projecting from the opposing surface of the wall 4. By virtue of this structure, that portion of the cap 7 within the rib 9 remains taut during the use of the dispenser, deforming only little or not at all.

In the dispensing chamber 6 there is provided a non-return valve consisting of a discoidal member 11 of flexible material overlying the apertures 5. From the

central part of the discoidal member 11 there upwardly projects an appendix 12, the free end of which extends towards the hole 8 on which it becomes superposed, to seal said hole, when the dispenser is in its rest state. From the discoidal member 11 there downwardly projects a profiled appendix 13 (coaxial with the appendix 12) which is inserted in and freely slidable within a guide hole provided in the wall 4, as can be easily seen from Figures 1 and 3.

From the discoidal member 11 there project about the appendix 13 flexible appendices 14 (four in number in the illustrated embodiment and easily seen from Figure 2, which represents a front view of the isolated discoidal member from below), the free ends of which rest on a substantially conical surface of a portion 15 of the wall 4.

The dispenser is formed from a total of only four component parts, which are easily and economically constructed and assembled.

If required, the cap 7 can be protected by a protection cover 16 (Figure 1) which can be provided with a tearable security tab 17 of known type, commonly used to guarantee that bottles in general have not been tampered with.

It will now be assumed that the two chambers 2 and 6 are filled with a cosmetic cream, that the cover 16 has been removed and that the dispenser is in the rest state of Figure 1 in which the upper end of the valve appendix 12 is urged by the appendices 14 to seal the delivery hole 8.

On pressing (in the direction of the arrow A of Figure 3) on that part of the cap 7 external to the rib 9, the cream present in the chamber 6 is initially pressurized (it should be noted that the free edge of the discoidal member 11 of the valve seals against a cylindrical surface of a seat housing the stem of the discoidal member), causing the lowering of the discoidal member (again with respect to Figures 1 and 3), the appendix 12 of which withdraws from the hole 8, so allowing the cream to pass to the outside, while the appendices 14 are flexed elastically outwards, as shown in Figure 2.

As soon as the pressure on the cap ceases (or as soon as the pressure of the cream present in the chamber 6 falls), the flexible appendices immediately lift the discoidal member upwards, with the appendix 12 sealing the hole 8.

That part of the cap 11 which had been deformed tends to return elastically to its initial rest position by passing through intermediate positions, such as that shown by dashed lines in Figure 1 and indicated by the letter B. As the hole 8 is closed, the return of the cap to its undeformed shape puts the cream present in the chamber 6 under vacuum, with consequent transfer from the chamber 2 to the chamber 6 of a quantity of cream equal to that which had been dispensed. During this stage, the piston 3 also rises along the cylindrical chamber, and the edges of the discoidal member flex within the chamber 6 (as shown by dashed lines in Figure 1), to hence withdraw from the surface against

which said edges would otherwise seal. When the cream pressure in the two chambers 2 and 6 reaches the same value, the valve reassumes the position indicated by full lines in Figure 1.

The foregoing description highlights the ease of use and the small number of components of the dispenser, the fact that air is never present within the chamber 6, that no metal parts are used (although the flexible appendices 14 could be replaced by a spring if desired), and that the only movable member of the dispenser is the discoidal member with its appendices, acting both as a non-return valve and as the valving member

3. A dispenser as claimed in claim 2, characterised in that said elastically yieldable members consist of elastically flexible appendices (14) projecting from said discoidal member (11) and having their free end facing the opposing surface of said transverse wall (4).

Claims

1. A creamy substance dispenser comprising a substantially rigid casing (1) bounding a cylindrical chamber (2) fillable with a creamy substance, said chamber being closed at one end by a movable piston (3) freely slidable under sealed conditions along the cylindrical surface of the chamber, which at its other end is bounded by a transverse wall (4) traversed by at least one aperture (5) connecting said cylindrical chamber (2) to a dispensing chamber (6), the outwardly facing portion of which is defined by a profiled body (7) fixed to said rigid casing (1) and formed of an elastically deformable material in which there is provided at least one delivery hole (8), in correspondence with said aperture (5) there being provided a non-return valve (11) which enables the creamy substance to pass freely from the cylindrical chamber (2) to the dispensing chamber (6), characterized in that from said body (7) of elastic material there projects in proximity to said delivery hole (8) at least one rib (9) which securely engages corresponding appendices (10) projecting from the opposing surface of said transverse wall (4) about said aperture (5) in the wall, said non-return valve (11) being housed in said dispensing chamber (6) and being provided with guide members (13) which constrain it to said transverse wall (4) while enabling it to freely move within said chamber (6) between a position in which the valve (11) seals said aperture (5) in said transverse wall (4) and a position in which an appendix (12) projecting from said valve (11) is superposed on said delivery hole (8) to seal it, elastically yieldable members (14) being provided which react between said valve (11) and said transverse wall (4) to urge said valve appendix (12) towards and against said delivery hole (8).
2. A dispenser as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that said valve consists of a discoidal member (11) the periphery of which is superposed on said aperture (5) and is elastically deformable within the dispensing chamber (6).
3. A dispenser as claimed in claim 2, characterised in that said elastically yieldable members consist of elastically flexible appendices (14) projecting from said discoidal member (11) and having their free end facing the opposing surface of said transverse wall (4).

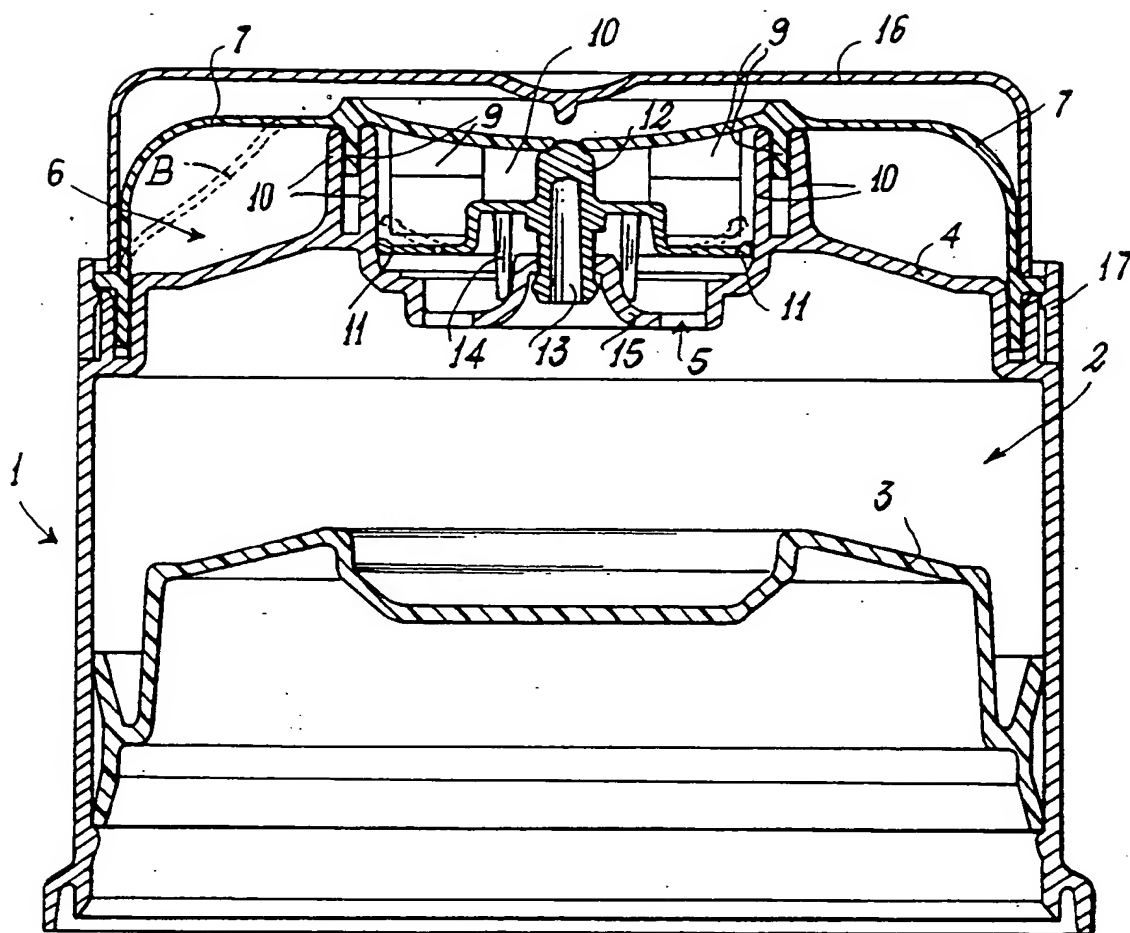


Fig. 1

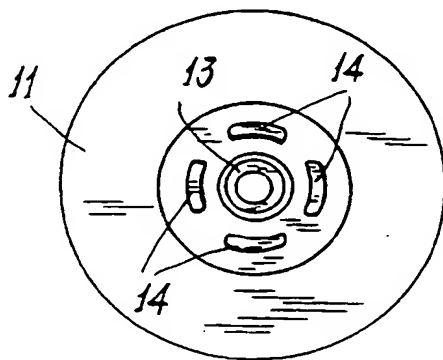


Fig. 2

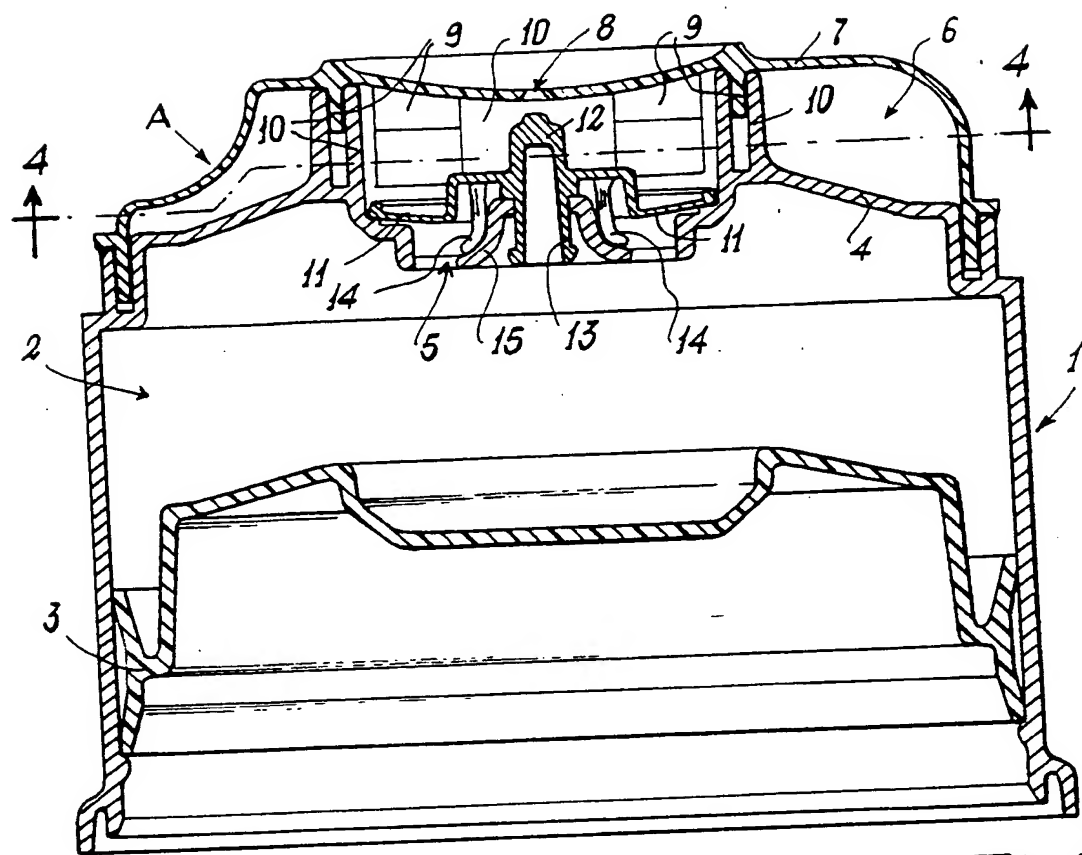


Fig. 3

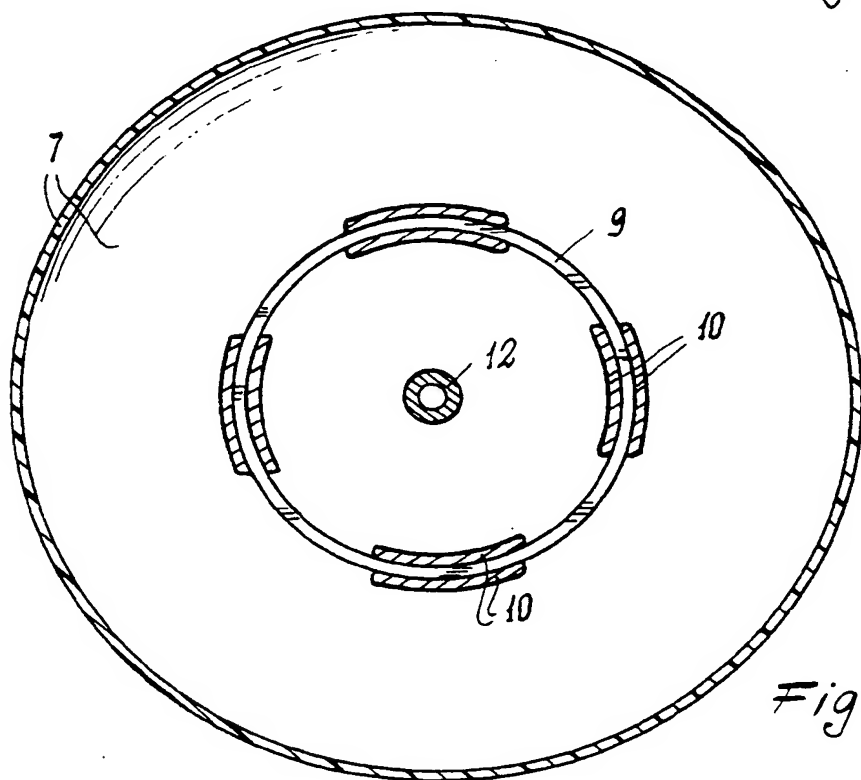
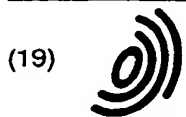


Fig. 4



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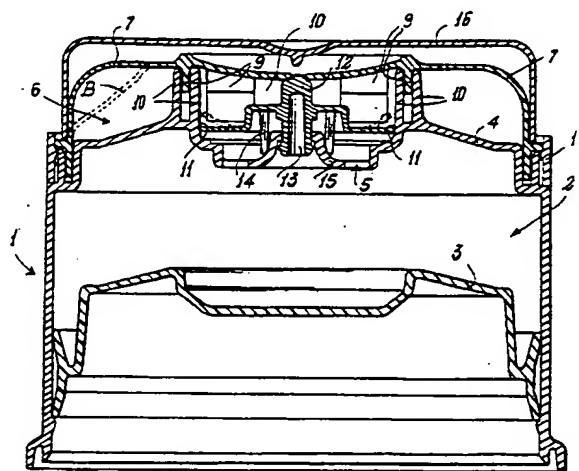


Fig. 1

EP 0 810 160 A3



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 97 10 8110

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
D, A	EP 0 600 286 A (LUMSON SRL) 8 June 1994 * abstract; figure 1 *	1	B65D47/34 B05B11/00
A	EP 0 447 335 A (CEBAL) 18 September 1991 * abstract; figure 1 *	1	
A	EP 0 452 260 A (PLASCO SA) 16 October 1991 * figure 6 *	1	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			B05B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
BERLIN		18 June 1998	Korth, C-F
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